
Love That Overcomes Failure (From Failure to Purpose)

Love That Overcomes

Pastor Wil Nichols

October 11, 2026

Victorious Praise Fellowship Church of God in Christ

2116 Page Rd. Durham NC 27703

WEBSITE: www.VictoriousPraise.org

EMAIL: PastorWil@VictoriousPraise.org, Info@VictoriousPraise.org

PHONE: (919) 957-7500

Sermon: Love That Overcomes: Love That Overcomes Failure (From Failure to Purpose)

Lesson Text

John 21:15–17 (KJV)¹⁵ So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, **Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?** He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, **Feed my lambs.** ¹⁶ He saith to him again the second time, **Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?** He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, **Feed my sheep.** ¹⁷ He saith unto him the third time, **Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?** Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, **Feed my sheep.**

Introduction

God's Love gives us the power to over the greatest enemies of live. So far, we've learned how His love gives us the power to overcome Fear, Shame, and Rejection. Fear was designed to keep us from trying. Shame was designed to keep from trying again. And Rejection was designed to change or identity so that we believe that we were never worth of the call.

Today we look at the next enemy to our Victory, and that is Failure. We all have experienced some form of failure – failure in marriage, family, or relationships, church or ministry, career or business, money or finances.

Failure has a way of making you believe that what you did has now disqualified; and at a spiritual level, it has changed what God can do with you or how he can use you.

Sometimes the hardest thing to overcome is not what happened to us, but what happened because of us.

Peter knew what it meant to fail.

Peter was not a casual follower of Jesus. He was one of the twelve. He was part of the inner circle. He had walked on water. He had witnessed miracles. He had seen Jesus transfigured. He had declared, *"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

And Peter was confident in his commitment.

When Jesus told the disciples that they would be offended because of Him, Peter boldly declared: Matthew 26: ³³ Peter answered and said unto him, Though all *men* shall be offended because of thee, *yet* will I never be offended.

But before the night was over, Peter did exactly what he said he would never do.

He denied Jesus. Not once. Not twice. But three times.

Matthew 26: ⁷⁵ And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

Peter had failed publicly, painfully, and personally.

But John 21 teaches us that failure does not have to be the final chapter of your story.

After the resurrection, Jesus intentionally meets Peter again.

Jesus does not meet Peter to embarrass him. Jesus does not meet Peter to expose him. Jesus does not meet Peter to discard him. Jesus meets Peter to restore him to his purpose.

Three times Peter denied Jesus. And three times Jesus asks Peter, “Lovest thou me?”

Jesus takes Peter back to the place of his failure, not to leave him there, but to lead him from beyond there.

Why? Because the love of God does more than forgive what you did. The love of God reminds you that your failure does not cancel your future.

Series and Sermon: Love That Overcomes: Love That Overcomes Failure (From Failure to Purpose)

(Recognize Your Failure, Receive Your Forgiveness, Resume Your Purpose)

I. Recognize Your Failure (Confronting What Happened)

John 21: ¹⁵ So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, **Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?** He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, **Feed my lambs.**

You cannot move beyond a failure that you refuse to face.

Jesus begins Peter's restoration by taking him back to the issue of his love and loyalty. Jesus calls him, “Simon, son of Jonas.”

Earlier, Jesus had given Simon a new name—Peter. Matthew 16:18 **“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.”**

But here Jesus addresses him as Simon. It forces Peter to confront the distance between who Jesus called him to be and how Peter had behaved.

Then Jesus asks: **“Lovest thou me more than these?”**

That question reaches back to Peter's earlier declaration that even if everybody else failed Jesus, he would not. Peter had compared his commitment to everybody else's commitment.

But failure had humbled him.

Before his failure, Peter said, in effect, “You can count on me.”

After his failure, Peter says: “Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.”

Peter no longer boasts about himself. He appeals to what Jesus knows about him.

Failure has a way of revealing things success can hide.

Failure reveals our weaknesses. Failure exposes our overconfidence. Failure confronts our dependence upon ourselves.

But Jesus does not confront Peter's failure to condemn him. He confronts Peter's failure so that Peter will no longer be controlled by them.

There is a difference between conviction and condemnation.

Condemnation says, "You failed, therefore you are a failure." Conviction says, "You failed, but God is not finished with you yet."

Some people spend years running from the place where they failed.

They refuse to talk about it. They refuse to confront it. They refuse to admit it.

But healing begins when you can say: "Yes, I failed—but my failure is something I did; it is not who I am."

God's love gives you the courage to confront your failure without allowing your failure to define you.

You cannot change yesterday, but you can stop allowing yesterday to control tomorrow.

II. Receive His Forgiveness (Claiming What Grace Provides)

John 21: ¹⁶ He saith to him again the second time, **Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?** He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, **Feed my sheep.**

God's grace is greater than the failure you cannot undo.

Jesus asks Peter the question again. "**Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?**"

Peter answers again: "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee."

And Jesus responds: "**Feed my sheep.**"

Notice what Jesus does not say. He does not say, "Peter, explain yourself." He does not say, "Peter, how could you do that to Me?" He does not say, "Peter, after everything I did for you, how could you deny Me?"

Jesus already knew what Peter had done. Jesus predicted it before Peter did it. And yet Jesus still came looking for Peter.

That is grace. Grace is God's answer to the failure you cannot go back and fix.

Peter cannot go back to the courtyard. He cannot un-deny Jesus. He cannot erase what he said. He cannot undo what he did.

But Jesus can redeem what we cannot reverse.

That is the power of God's love.

1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Forgiveness means your past may explain you, but it does not have permission to imprison you.

The enemy wants to replay your failure. Grace wants to redeem your future.

The enemy says, “Remember what you did.” Grace says, “Remember what Christ did.”

The enemy points to your mistake. Grace points to the cross.

The enemy reminds you of your worst moment. Grace reminds you of Christ's finished work.

Peter's failure was real—but so was Christ's forgiveness.

Romans 5:20 “But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

God's love does not pretend the failure never happened. God's love declares that the failure will not have the final word.

Sometimes God has forgiven us, but we are still punishing ourselves. Sometimes everybody else has moved on, but we keep returning to the scene of our worst mistake.

But at some point, you have to believe that the blood of Jesus is sufficient even for you.

Stop carrying what Christ died to remove. Stop paying for what Jesus already paid for. Stop condemning what God has already covered with grace.

III. Resume Your Purpose (Continuing What God Planned)

John 21: ¹⁷ He saith unto him the third time, **Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?** Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, **Feed my sheep.**

God's purpose for your life can survive your greatest failure.

Jesus asks Peter the question a third time. Peter is grieved. Why three times?

Because Peter denied Jesus three times. Three denials. Three questions.

But More Importantly: Three opportunities to declare his love.

Jesus connects his failure to his love, and then restores his Purpose: 1. “**Feed my lambs.**” 2. “**Feed my sheep.**” 3. “**Feed my sheep.**”

Your worst moment doesn't cancel you calling, God's love restores your purpose.

God's love does not just forgive your failure, it gives you purpose beyond your failure.

Your failure may change you. Your failure may humble you. Your failure may teach you. Your failure may mature you. But your failure does not cancel you!

God can still use you. God can still call you. God can still anoint you. God can still open doors for you. God can still fulfill His purpose through you.

It is time to get up. It is time to move forward. It is time to resume your purpose.

Conclusion

Maybe you failed in a relationship. Maybe you failed in a marriage. Maybe you failed financially. Maybe you failed morally. Maybe you failed professionally. Maybe you failed spiritually.

But hear the Word of the Lord: Your failure is not final! God has not canceled you!

Proverbs 24:16 “For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again.”

You may have fallen— But rise again! You may have stumbled— But rise again! You may have made mistakes— But rise again! You may have lost some things— But rise again!

Micah 7:8 “Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise.”

Recognize Your Failure—but don't remain there.

Receive His Forgiveness—because grace is greater than what you did.

And Resume Your Purpose—because God still has something for you to do.

Romans 8:²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

Philippians 3:13–14 “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

You cannot change what is behind you. But you can reach for what is before you.

You cannot rewrite yesterday. But God can redeem tomorrow.

You cannot undo your failure. But God's love can overcome your failure.

Romans 8:37 “Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”

Midweek Study Lesson Plan (Sermon: Love That Overcomes Failure (From Failure to Purpose))

Lesson Text

- **Primary Text**
 - **John 21:15–17**
- **Supporting Texts**
 - **Proverbs 24:16; Philippians 3:13–14; Acts 2:36–41**

Sermon Outline

- **Recognize Your Failure (Confronting What Happened)**
- **Receive His Forgiveness (Claiming What Grace Provides)**
- **Resume Your Purpose (Continuing What God Planned)**

Questions: (What was your main takeaway from this message?)

I. Getting To Know “Me”

1. Which do you prefer? Choose one from each pair: Sweet potato or pumpkin? Hot chocolate or coffee? Chicken or turkey? Steak or hamburger? French fries or baked potato?
2. What's one thing you've accomplished this year that you're especially proud of?

II. Into The Bible

1. Case Study: The Prodigal Son Restored. Read Luke 15:18-24. What can we learn about God's response to our failure and repentance by studying the father's behavior in this story told by Jesus?
2. Read Psalm 51:1-10. On what bases does David pray for forgiveness of his sins and for sanctification? On what scriptural basis do we as believers go to God for restoration after we have failed?

III. Life Application

1. Why is it hard to believe that God still wants to use us to help others, even after we mess up?
2. Jesus already knew Peter would deny him. Instead of asking Peter why he stumbled, he asked about his heart. Why is it difficult for us to be honest with God about our shortcomings?